

[America's Challenge, Indiana's Opportunity](#)

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The following remarks were adapted from Pence's address on July 6 to the Muncie-Delaware County Chamber of Commerce. -- Editor

Despite the recent strides Indiana has made economically, many Hoosiers are still hurting. The unemployment rate in Indiana is more than 8 percent and that doesn't even begin to tell the tale as many Hoosiers have just quit looking for work, and many others are underemployed, having gone back to work making a whole lot less than they were making before.

In Washington, D.C., the big debate is the issue of our \$14 trillion national debt and whether or not we will raise the debt ceiling. The United States of America has incurred debts beyond our borrowing authority and now we have to pay them. I believe the answer is to cut and cap spending and enact a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution.

Step one is to cut spending now in real and meaningful ways. Congress should cut spending by more than a dollar for every dollar of increased borrowing authority.

Step two is changing the way we spend the people's money. The time has come for us to pass a statutory cap on spending, the likes of which we haven't seen since the days of Gramm-Rudman. That would mean Congress would pass legislation that limits spending on an annual basis to a certain level and if Congress does not hit that mark spending is automatically reduced.

Step three is to send a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution to the states for ratification. Congress should pass by the necessary two-thirds margin a Balanced Budget Amendment that requires Congress to balance the federal budget and limits federal spending to one-fifth of gross domestic product, as I proposed previously in 2010.

This is America's challenge. How we handle this challenge will determine the economic vitality of not only Muncie and Delaware County, but Indiana and the country as a whole.

But America's challenge is Indiana's opportunity. It is extraordinary to note that Indiana, by example, is already leading the way back to where Washington, D.C., should be headed. Indiana was the third fastest growing economy of all 50 states in 2010. Our growth rate was 4.6 percent, while the national growth rate was 2.6 percent.

I believe the reason for Indiana's growth is a combination of fiscal responsibility and a focus on job creation by the Daniels administration.

Unlike most states, Indiana has its fiscal house in order, and it has been turning heads around the country. And Indiana has leaned into the fight in the last six years on economic development. Indiana has a story to tell and the national government would do well to follow our state's lead.

Now, we have an opportunity, literally, to create a higher quality of life, more good-paying jobs, great schools, safe streets, strong families, and on top of that, really lead the country back and be an example to the country that when you practice what you preach about fiscal responsibility and growth, stand back, because America still works.

Mike Pence represents the Sixth Congressional District of Indiana, which includes Delaware County.